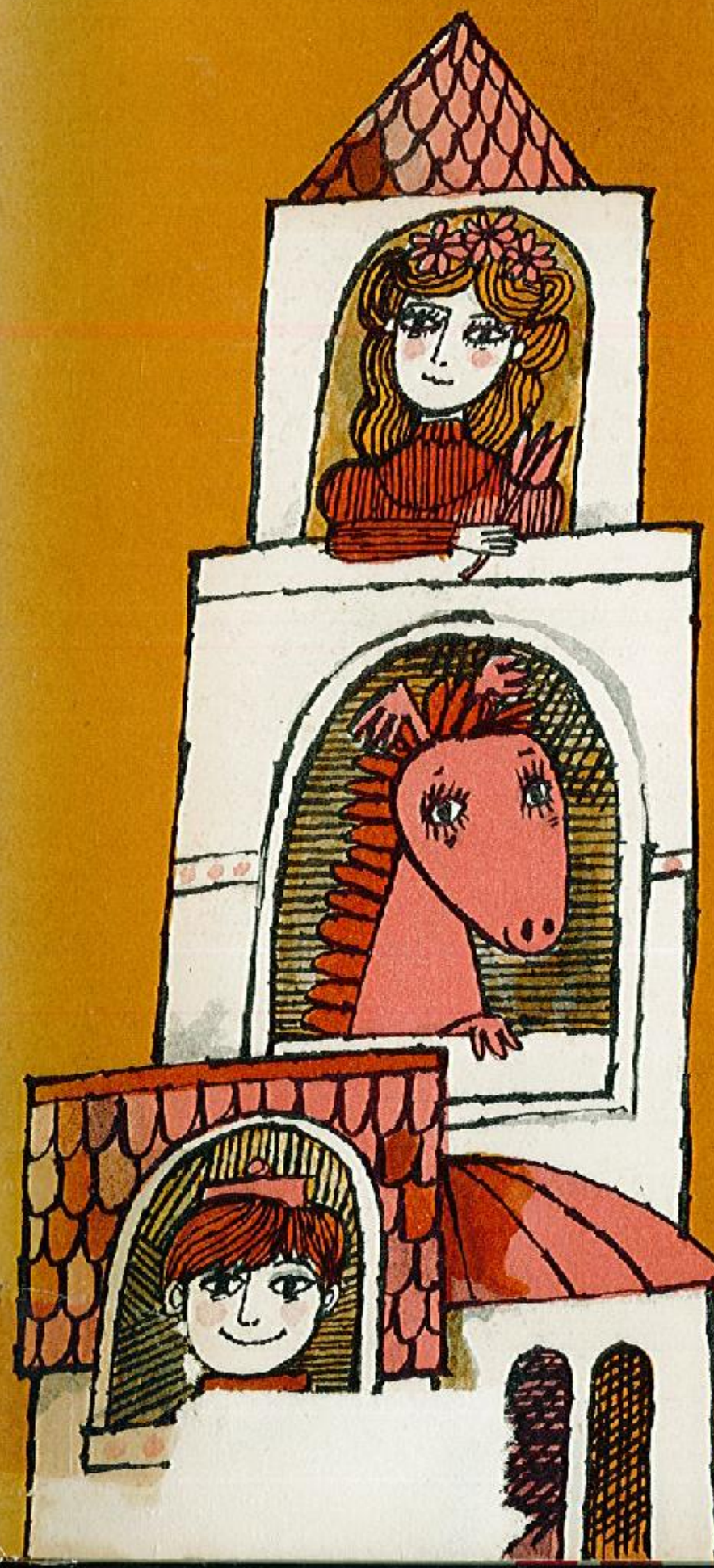

THE WONDERFUL DRAGON OF TIMLIN

by Tomie De Paola

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One day Princess Dulcia finds a little pink dragon crying on the beach of Timlin island. Her faithful page, Stefan, builds Dragon a house on the sand, and all summer long the three play croquet and drink delicious strawberry ice-cream sodas.

But who ever heard of a gentle dragon? All the people who sail over from the mainland to buy kumquats and artichokes think Dragon is a monster and threaten never to return. How the little pink dragon proves them wrong and brings happiness to the kingdom of Timlin is a story that all young children will love and remember.

04-08 $3.50

The Wonderful Dragon of Timlin

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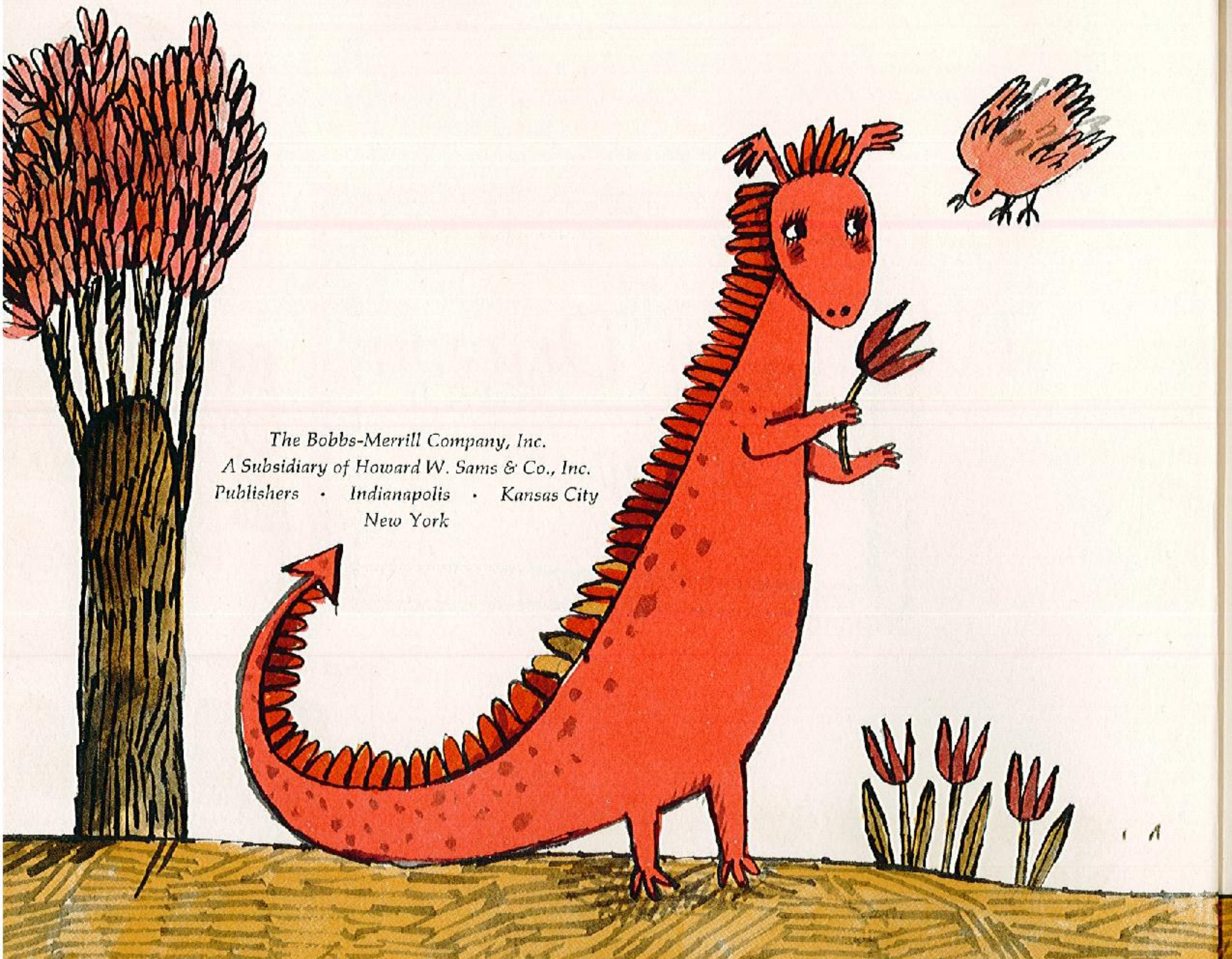
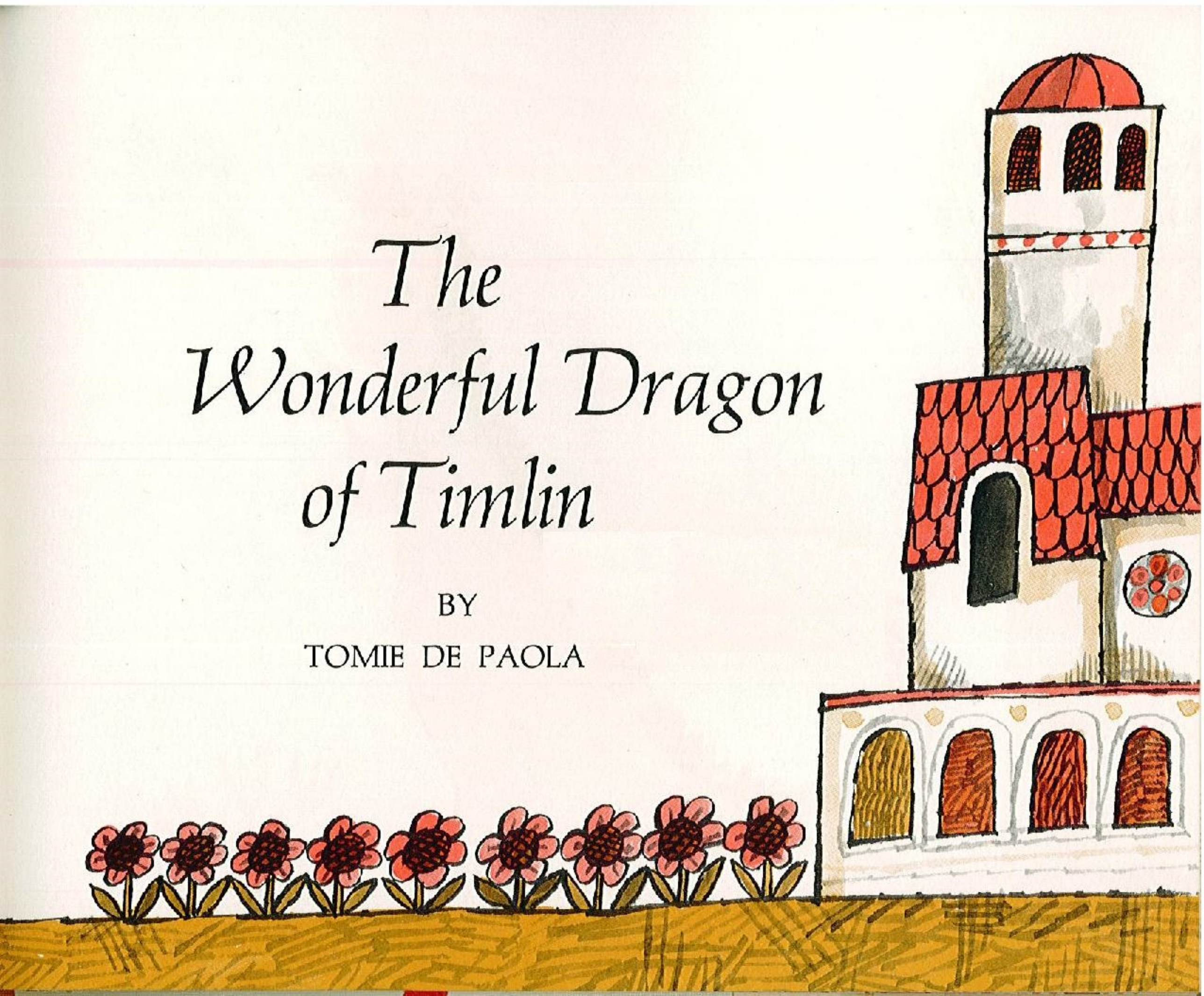


The Wonderful Dragon of Timlin

BY

TOMIE DE PAOLA



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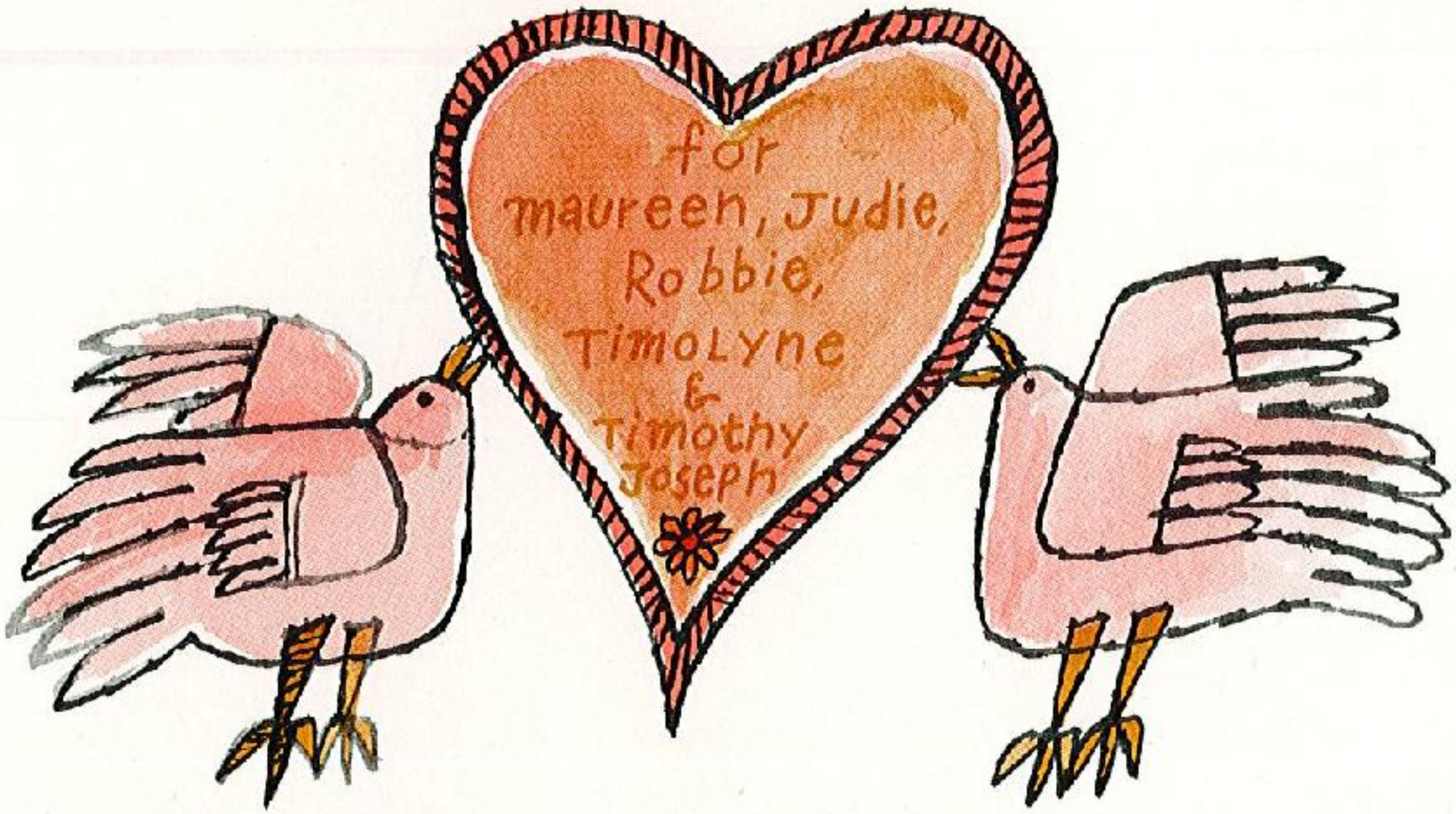
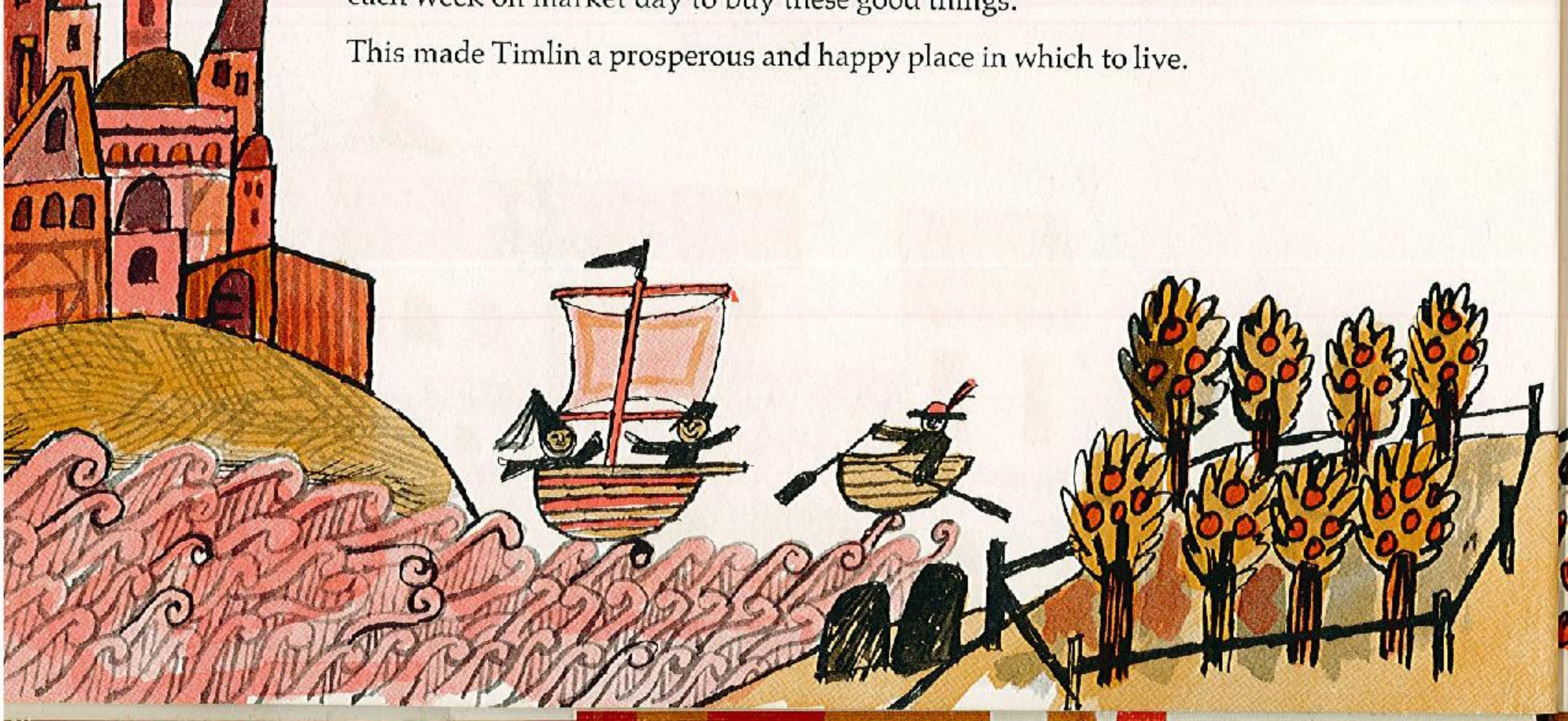
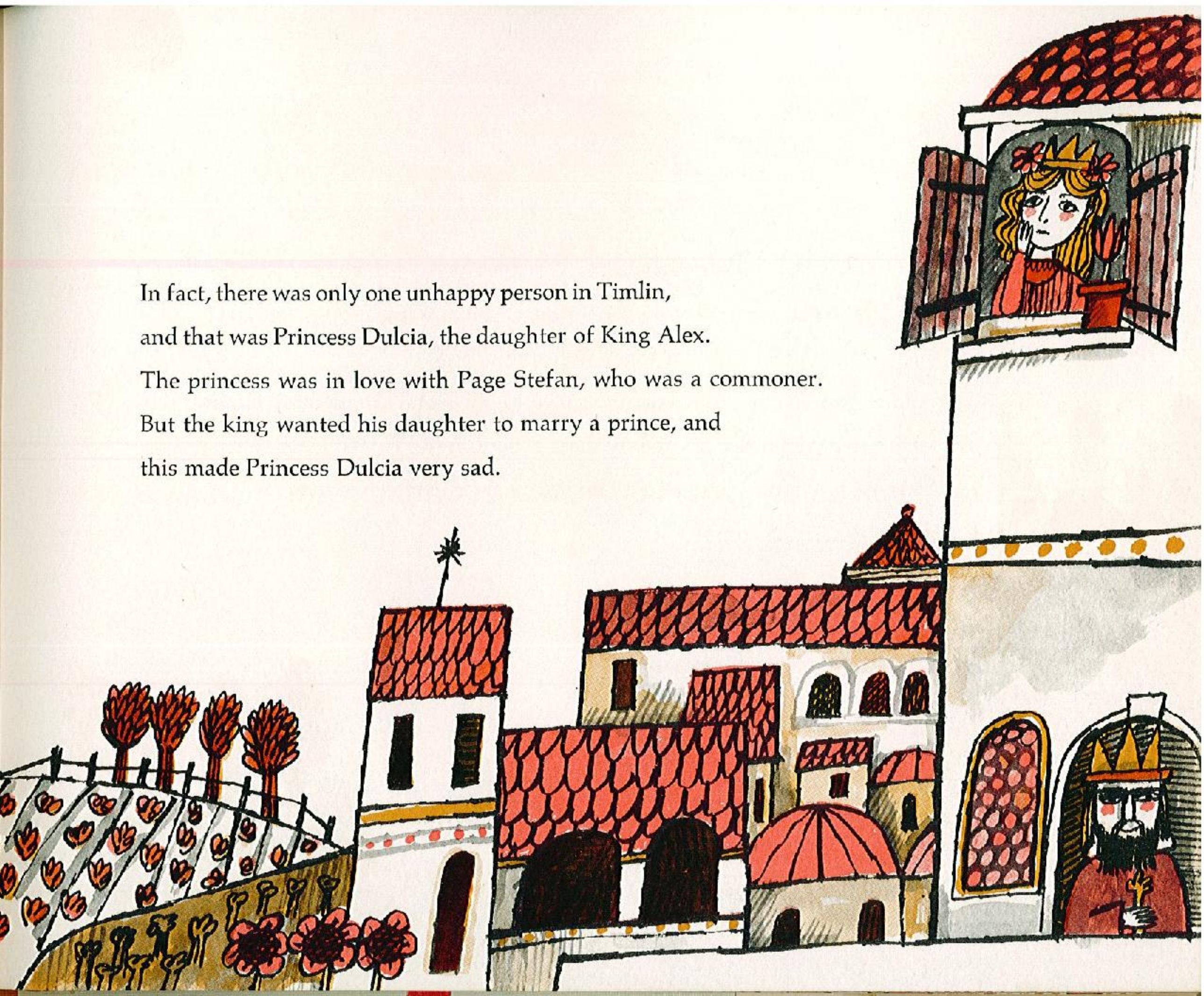
First edition
Library of Congress Catalog Card Number: 66-15693
Designed by The Etheredges


for
maureen, Judie,
Robbie,
TimoLyne
&
Timothy
Joseph

Long ago, in the middle of a shining sea, there was a little island kingdom.
The land on this island was very fertile, and many fine crops,
such as kumquats and artichokes, grew there.
And so people from the mainland sailed to the island kingdom of Timlin
each week on market day to buy these good things.
This made Timlin a prosperous and happy place in which to live.

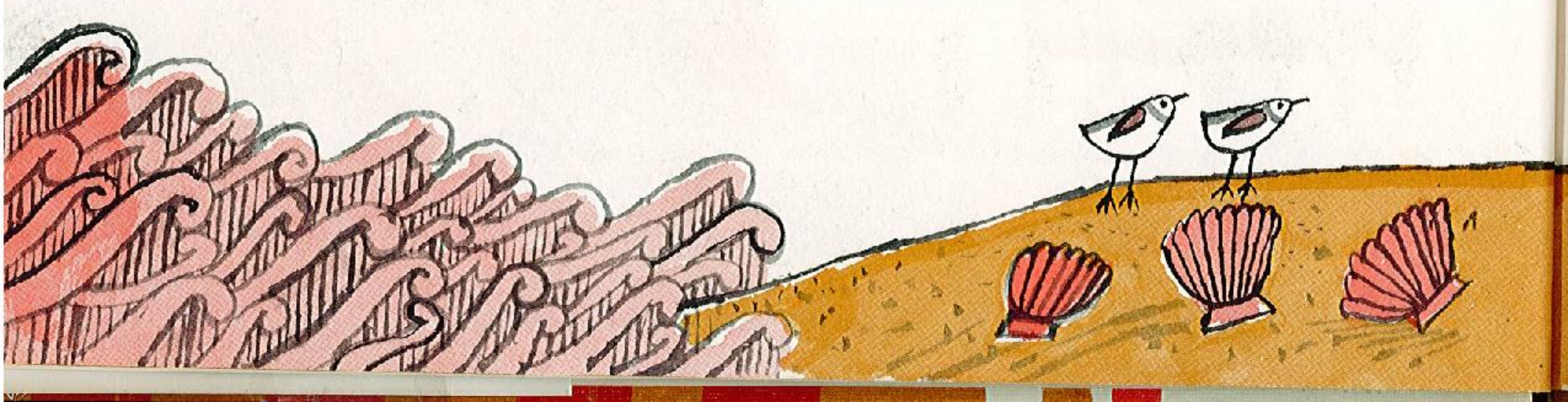


In fact, there was only one unhappy person in Timlin,
and that was Princess Dulcia, the daughter of King Alex.
The princess was in love with Page Stefan, who was a commoner.
But the king wanted his daughter to marry a prince, and
this made Princess Dulcia very sad.

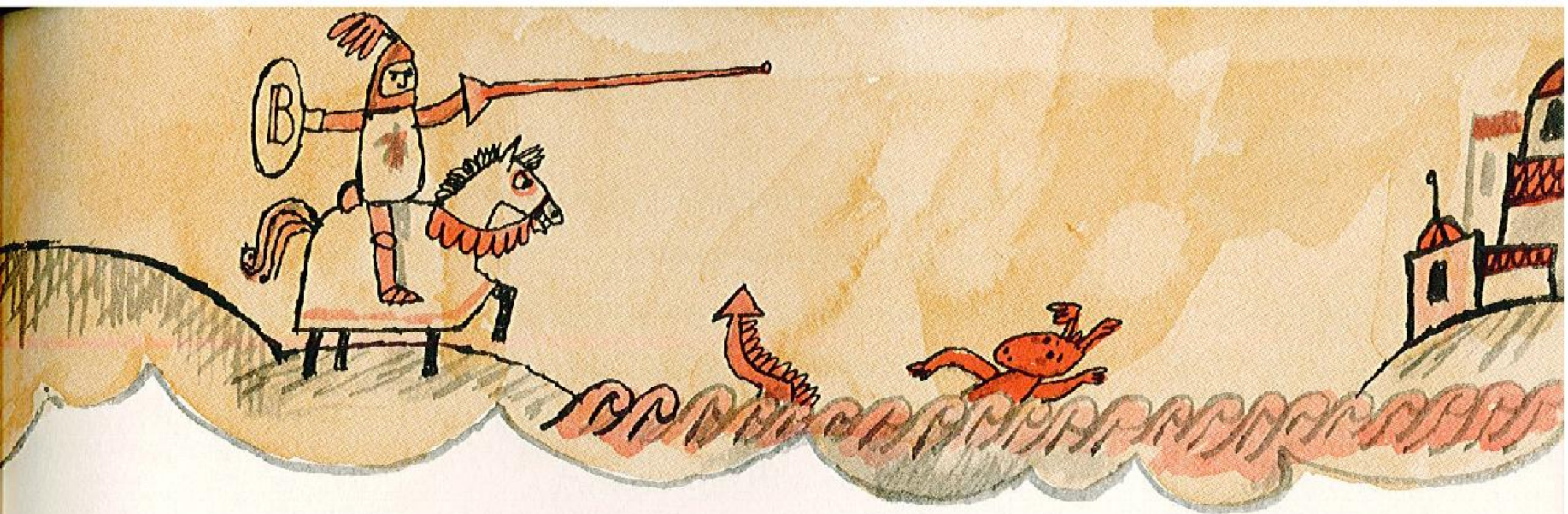


One summer day, Princess Dulcia was gathering seashells
on the beach when she came upon a remarkable beast,
the likes of which had never been seen before in Timlin.
And he was weeping.

The princess said, "Hello. I am Princess Dulcia.
I have never seen a creature as beautiful as you.
Who are you and where do you come from?"



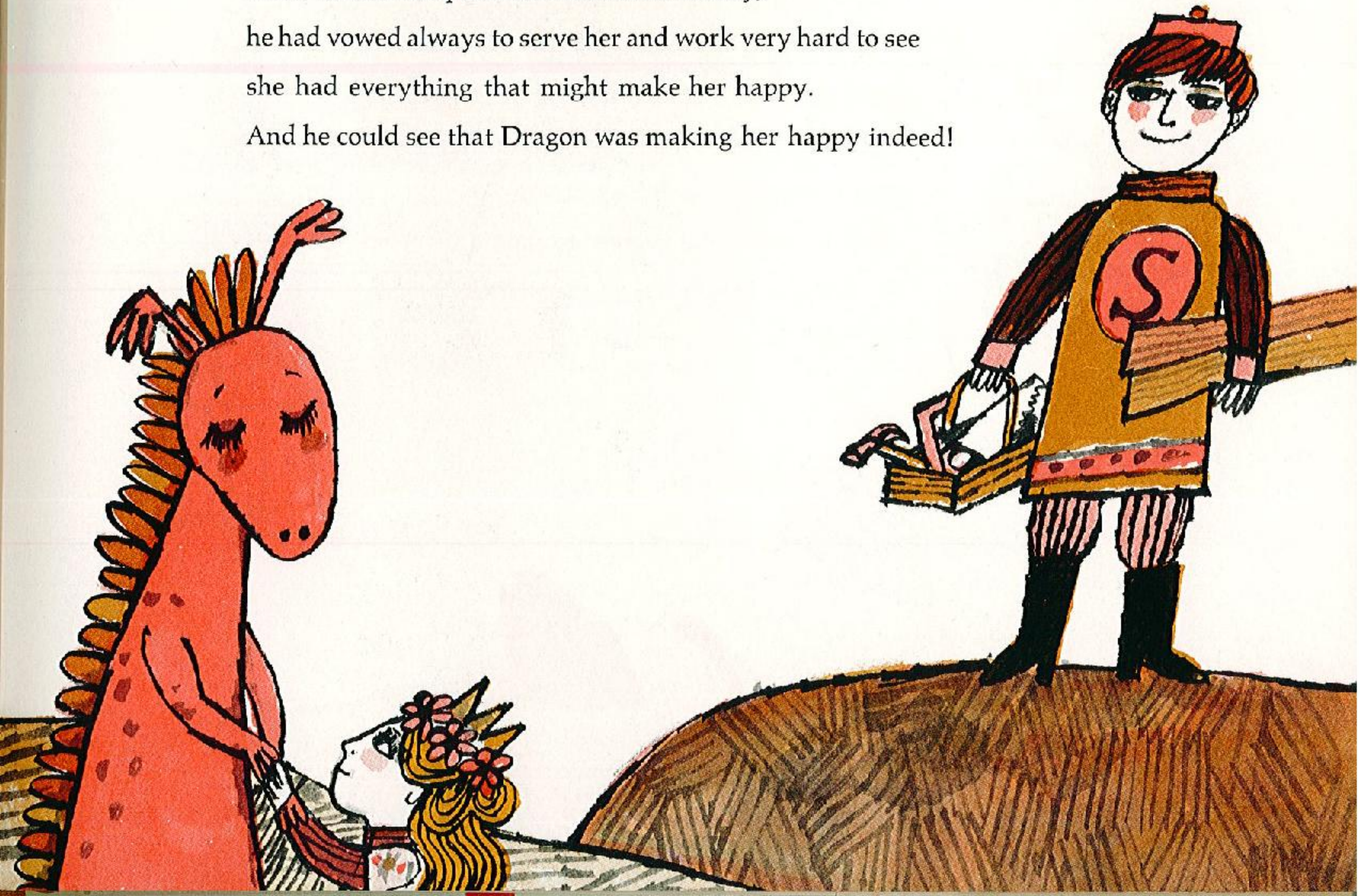
The beast was startled, but Princess Dulcia's voice was so sweet that all his fear vanished. "Dear Princess, I am a gentle dragon. When I was young I saw children dancing and heard birds singing and I felt the world was a happy place. So I became gentle and never breathed fire and smoke the way other dragons do. I was happy until yesterday.



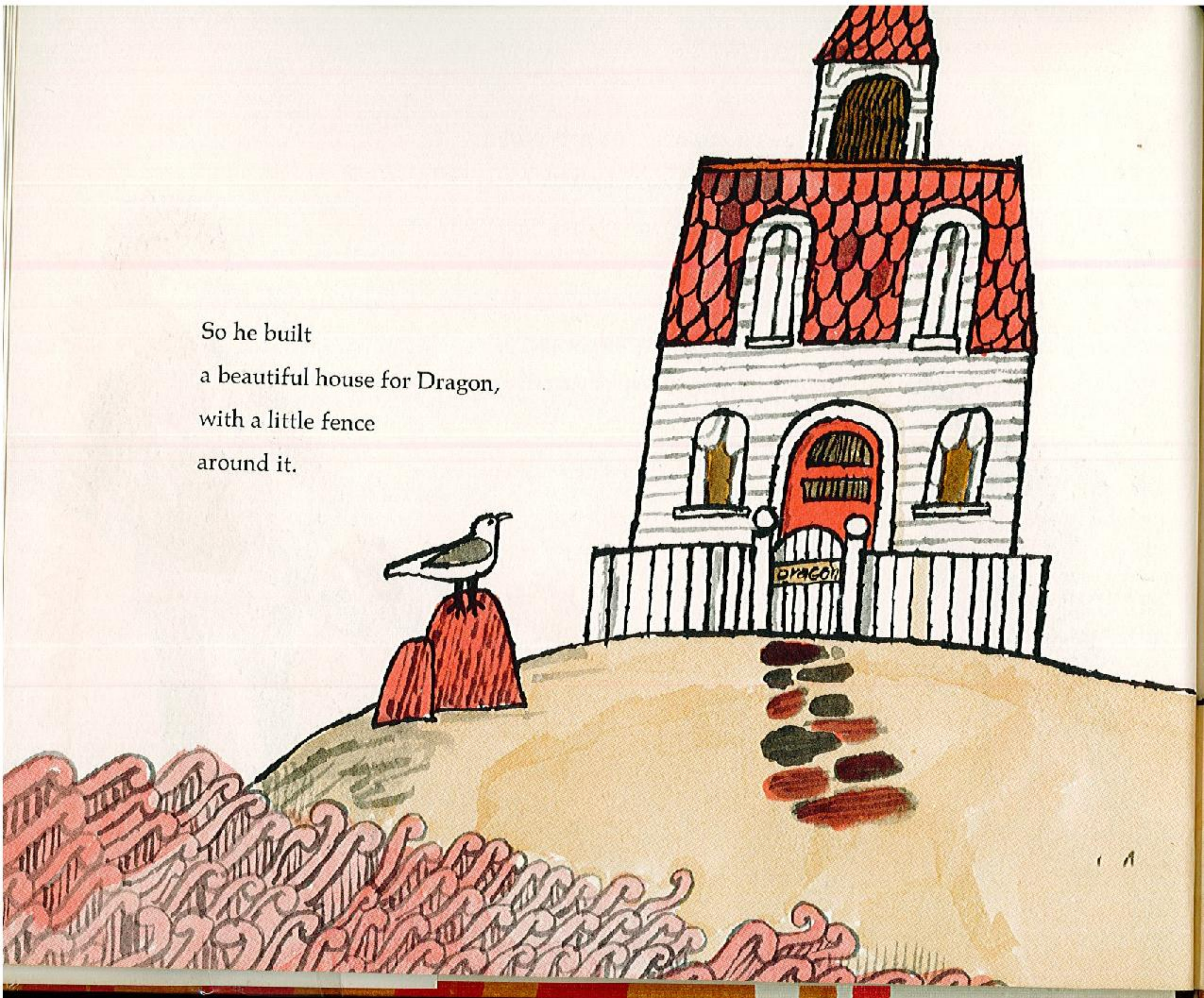
"Then a brave knight who had fought the fierce dragons
rode out to fight me, too, not knowing I was gentle.
He chased me into the sea and I swam and swam
until I came to this little island.
So now I am homeless and very sad."

Princess Dulcia, who had a good heart, said, "Oh, Dragon,
there is no need to be unhappy.
There are no brave knights in Timlin, so you can live here
and I will be your friend, for I, too, am sad.
My father wants me to marry a prince,
but I am in love with Page Stefan."
The dragon happily agreed to stay,
so Princess Dulcia ran off to ask Page Stefan
to build Dragon a house on the beach.

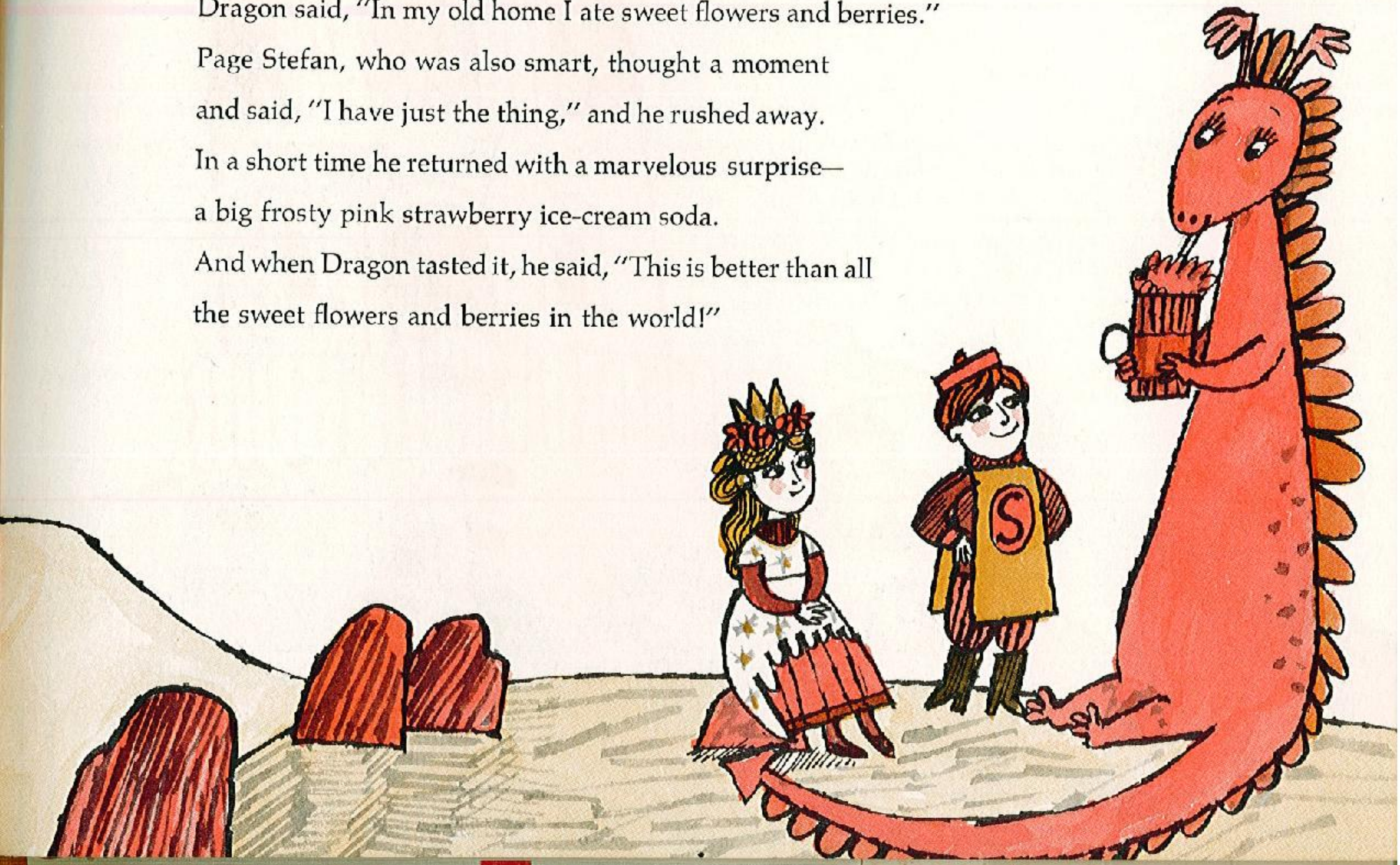
Now Page Stefan was a handsome and nice boy.
Since he and the princess could never marry,
he had vowed always to serve her and work very hard to see
she had everything that might make her happy.
And he could see that Dragon was making her happy indeed!



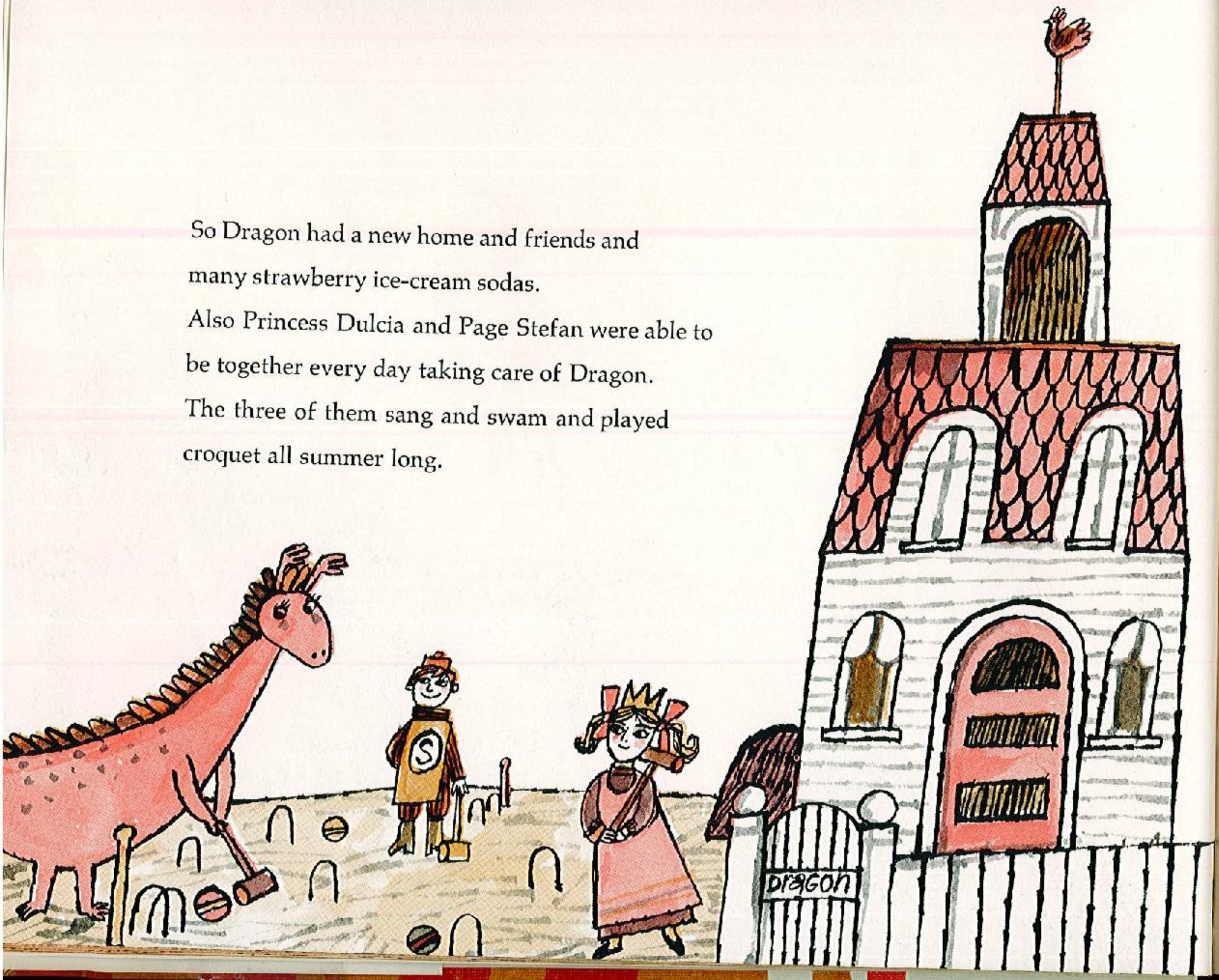
So he built
a beautiful house for Dragon,
with a little fence
around it.

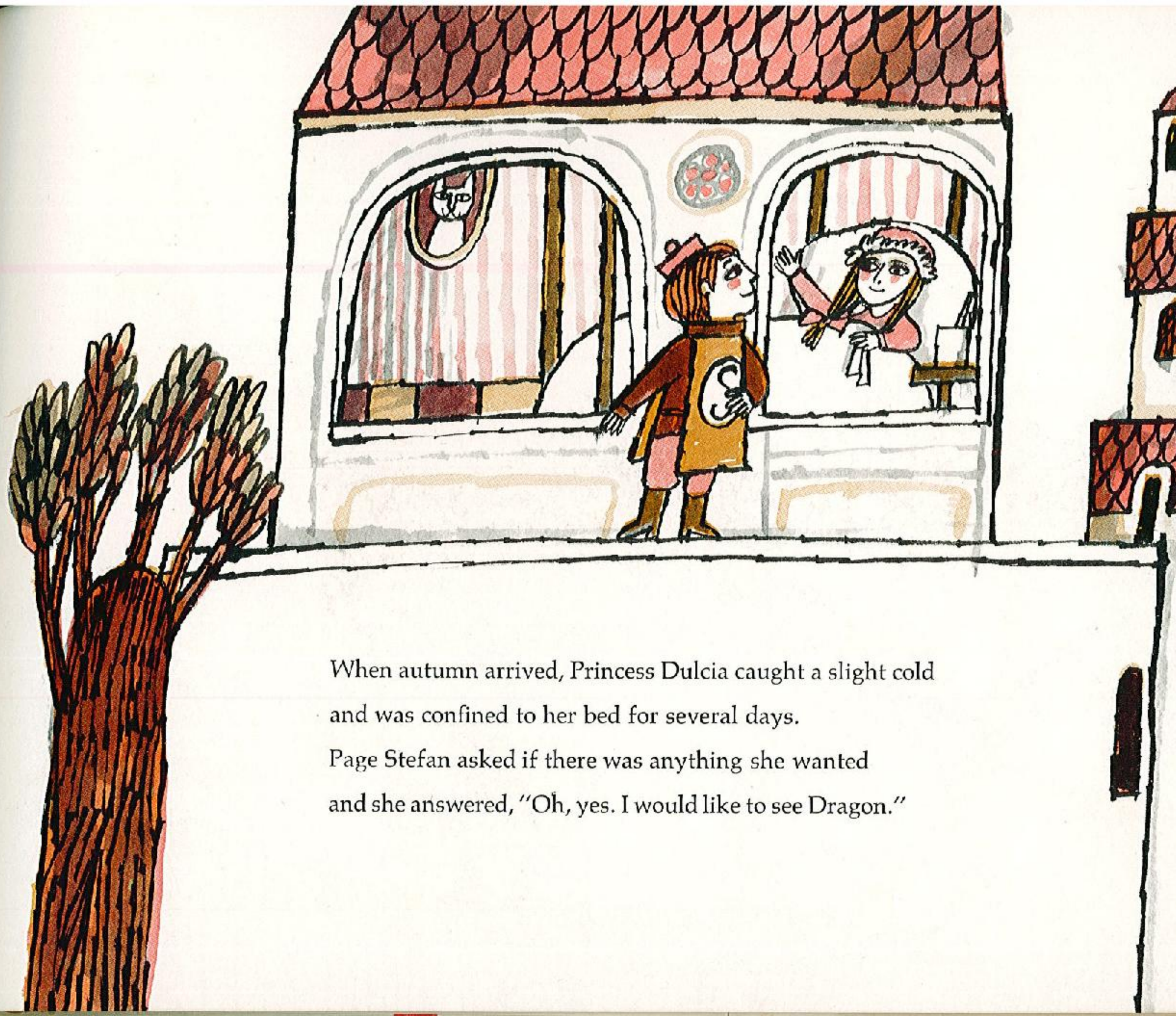


"Now, Dragon, we must get you some food.
What do you eat?" asked Page Stefan.
Dragon said, "In my old home I ate sweet flowers and berries."
Page Stefan, who was also smart, thought a moment
and said, "I have just the thing," and he rushed away.
In a short time he returned with a marvelous surprise—
a big frosty pink strawberry ice-cream soda.
And when Dragon tasted it, he said, "This is better than all
the sweet flowers and berries in the world!"



So Dragon had a new home and friends and
many strawberry ice-cream sodas.
Also Princess Dulcia and Page Stefan were able to
be together every day taking care of Dragon.
The three of them sang and swam and played
croquet all summer long.

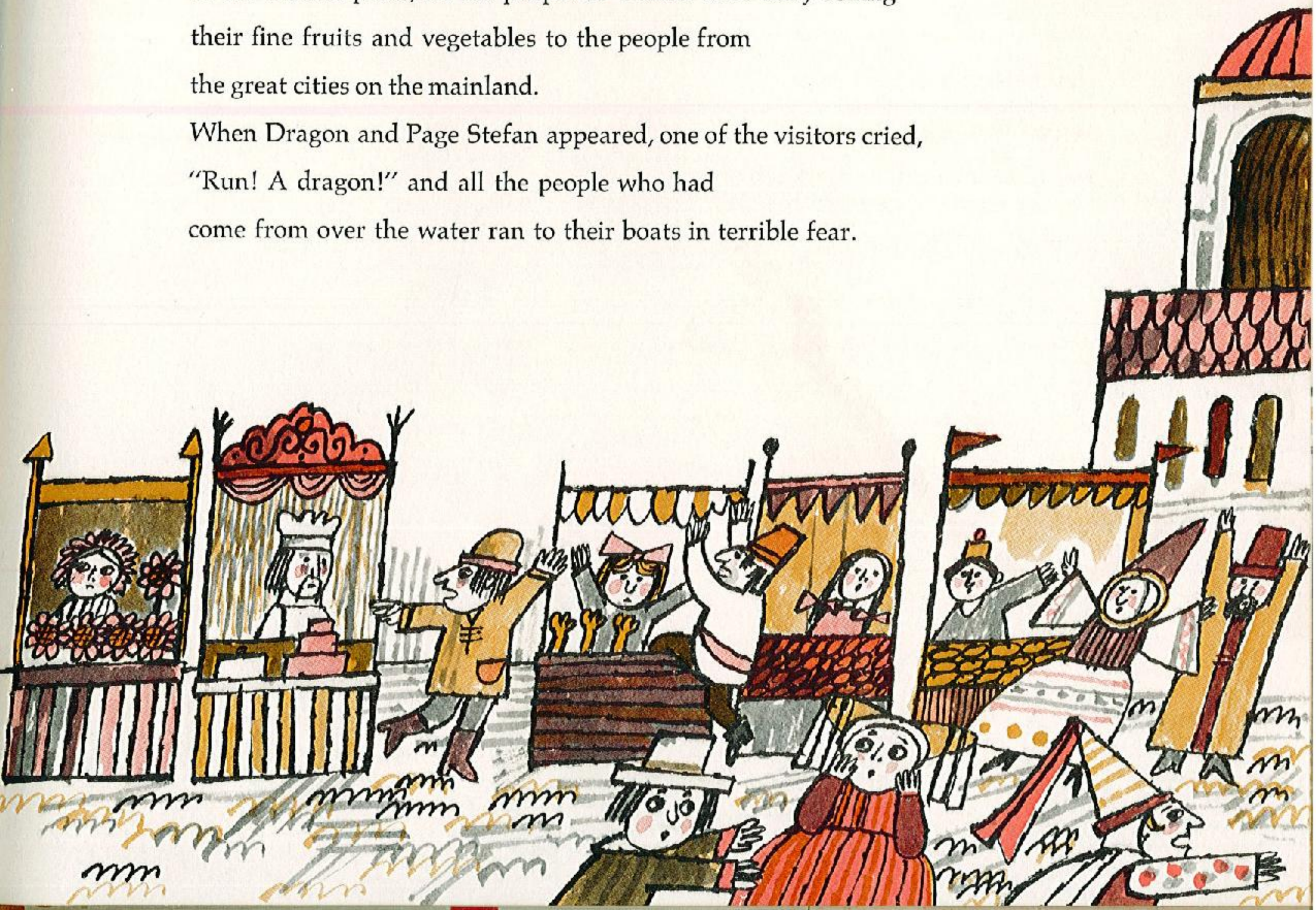




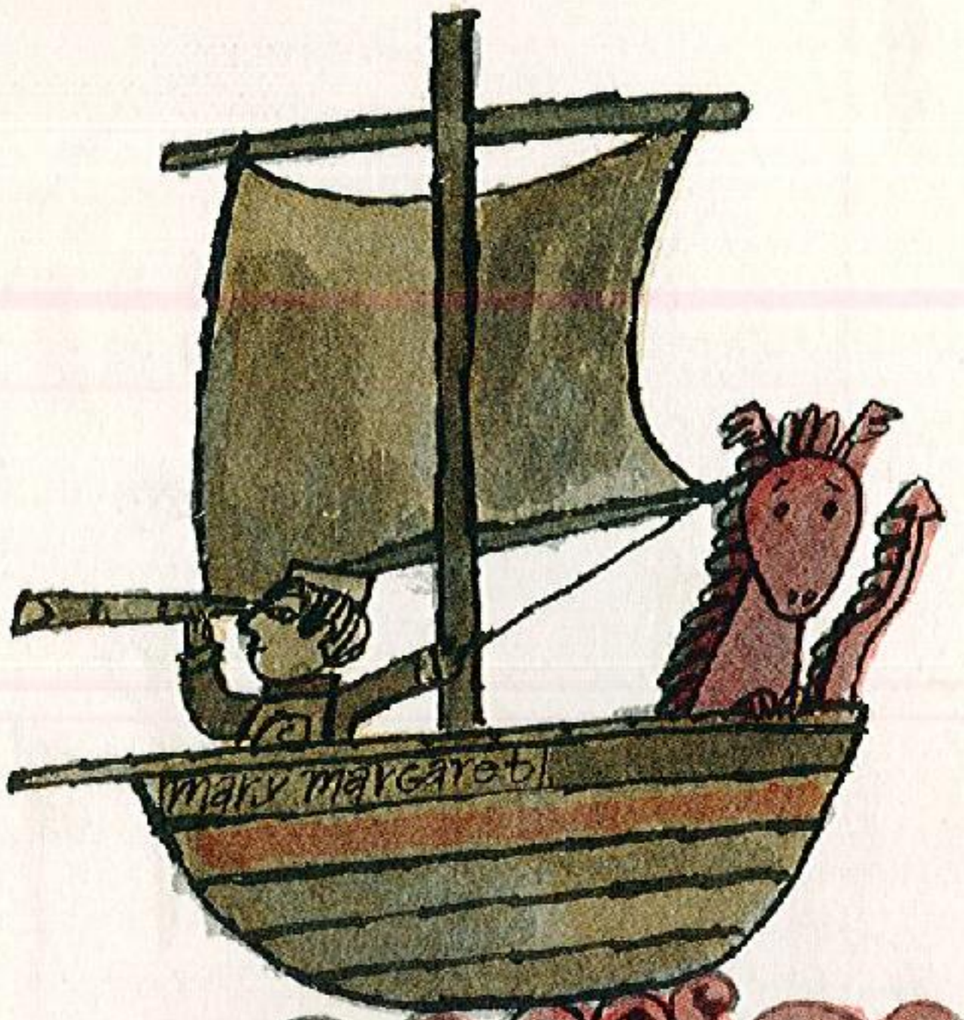
When autumn arrived, Princess Dulcia caught a slight cold
and was confined to her bed for several days.
Page Stefan asked if there was anything she wanted
and she answered, "Oh, yes. I would like to see Dragon."

Dragon had missed the princess and was happy he was going to visit her.
As soon as the sun was high in the sky, Dragon and Page Stefan
started out toward the palace.
Unfortunately, it was market day, and the way to the palace
was right through the market place.

In the market place, all the people of Timlin were busy selling
their fine fruits and vegetables to the people from
the great cities on the mainland.
When Dragon and Page Stefan appeared, one of the visitors cried,
"Run! A dragon!" and all the people who had
come from over the water ran to their boats in terrible fear.



Booths were knocked over and the streets were filled with trampled
oranges, eggplants, flowers, and sticky honey.
The entire market place was ruined. It was a terrible catastrophe.
The people from the mainland cried as they sailed away,
"We will not be back until the dragon is gone!"
King Alex was furious. He knew that without market day,
Timlin would become poor. So, he summoned Page Stefan and said,
"I blame you for everything. I order you and that dragon banished!"
When Princess Dulcia heard of this, she fainted and
took a turn for the worse.



And Dragon wept and wept.

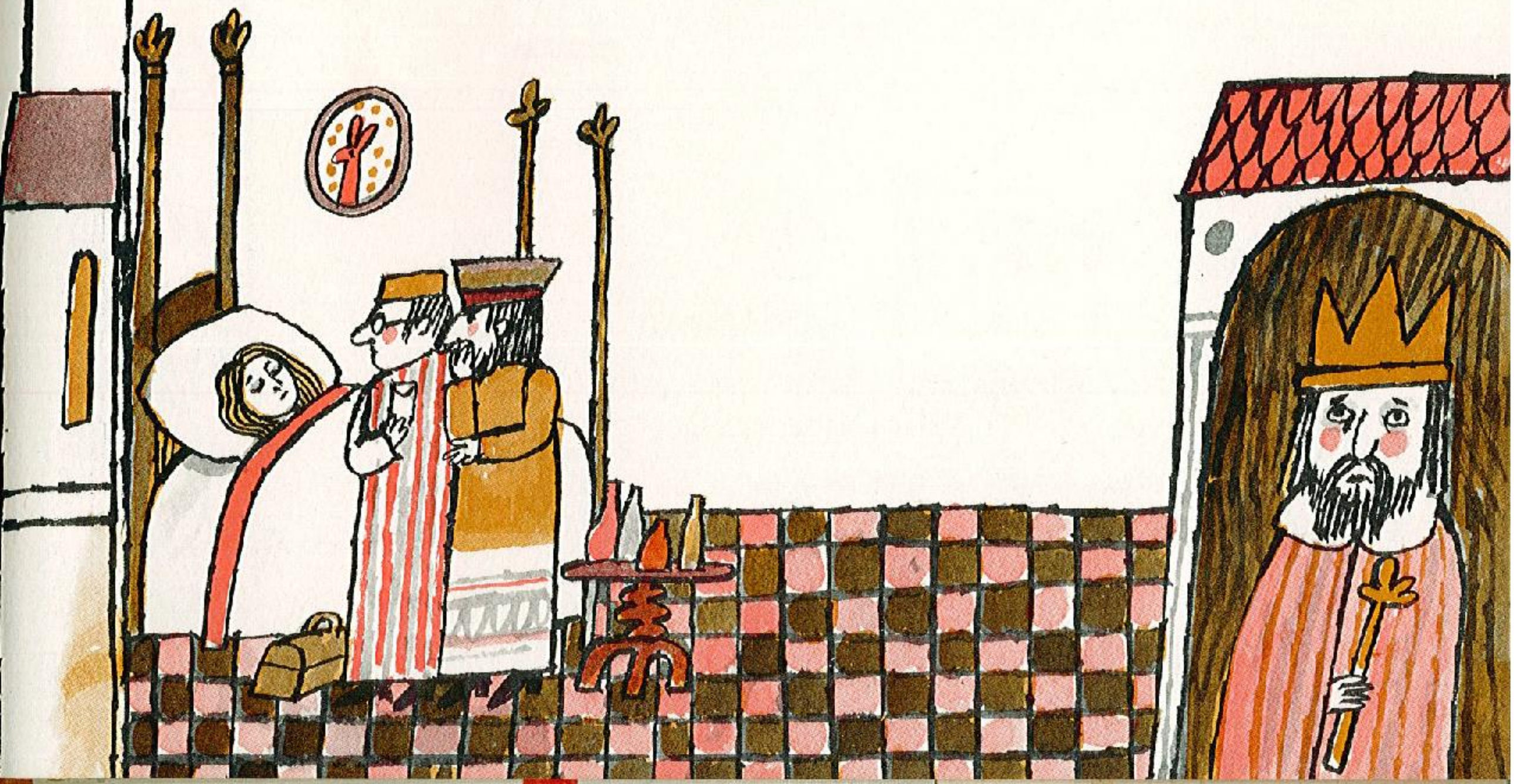
Page Stefan comforted him. "Don't worry, Dragon.

I will think of some way that we both can return.

But, hurry, we must be off the island before midnight."

And they sailed away that very hour.

News was sent to the mainland that it was again safe to come to market day.
But in the palace Princess Dulcia lay very ill,
because she had lost the page she loved and the wonderful dragon.
All the doctors could do nothing. King Alex was very worried.



Market day arrived and was busier than ever.

Suddenly a curious old man walked into the middle of the square.

No one knew where he had come from.

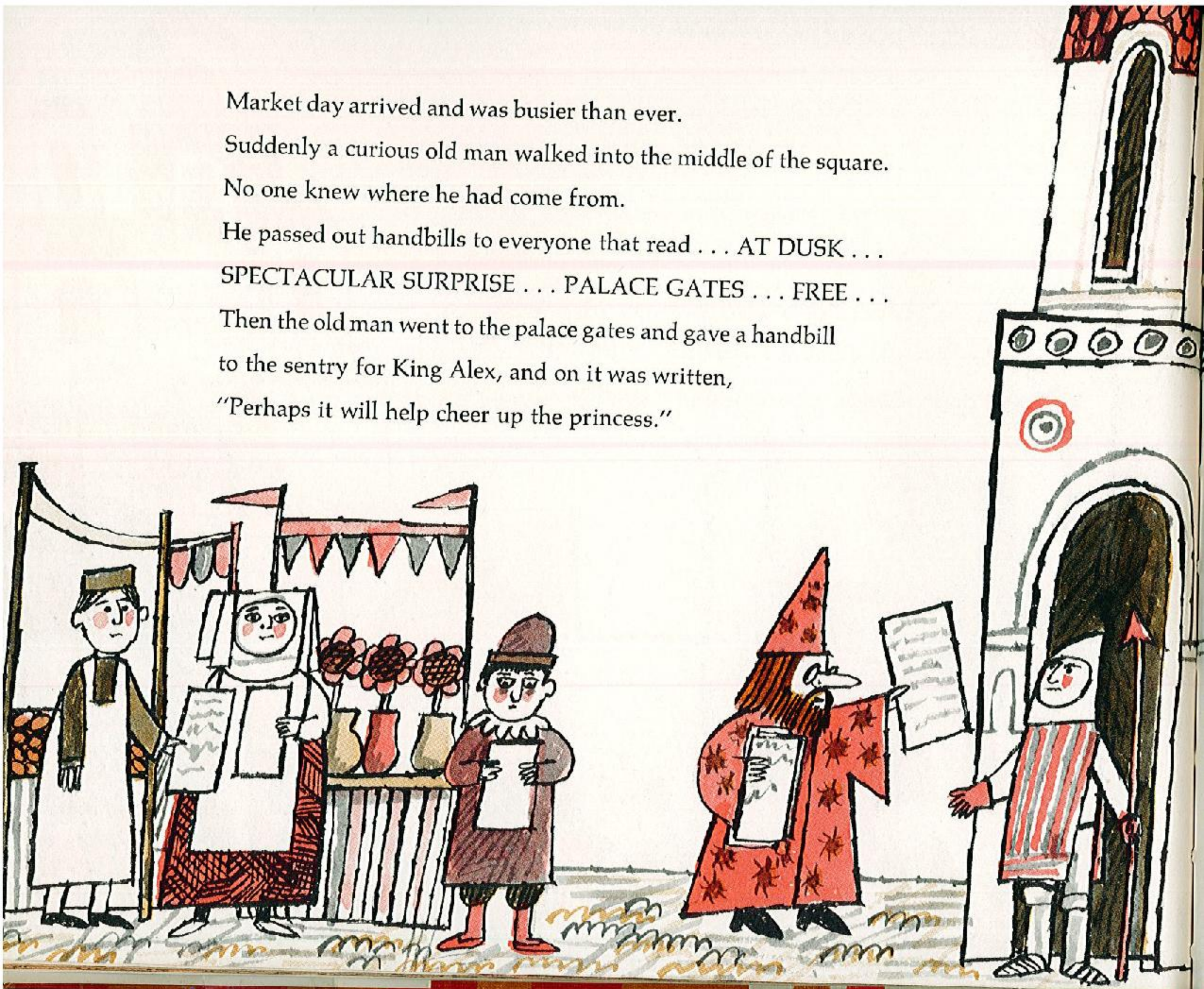
He passed out handbills to everyone that read . . . AT DUSK . . .

SPECTACULAR SURPRISE . . . PALACE GATES . . . FREE . . .

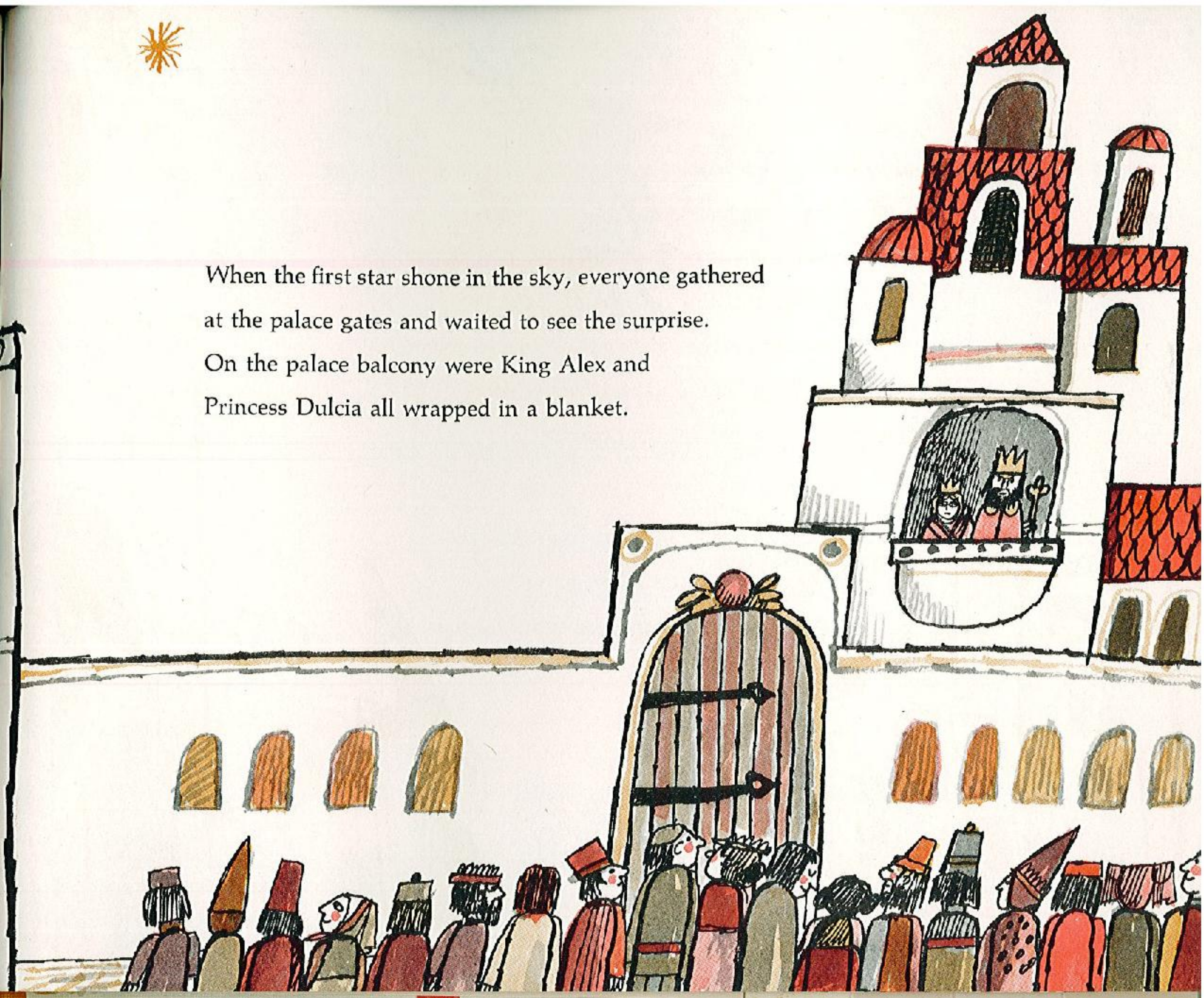
Then the old man went to the palace gates and gave a handbill

to the sentry for King Alex, and on it was written,

"Perhaps it will help cheer up the princess."



When the first star shone in the sky, everyone gathered
at the palace gates and waited to see the surprise.
On the palace balcony were King Alex and
Princess Dulcia all wrapped in a blanket.



The crowd stood waiting, when all of a sudden over the palace came a burst of colored light.

It spread out and showered down like a beautiful flower.

And then there was another—and another.

No one had ever seen such beautiful and unusual fireworks.

When the display was over, the visitors

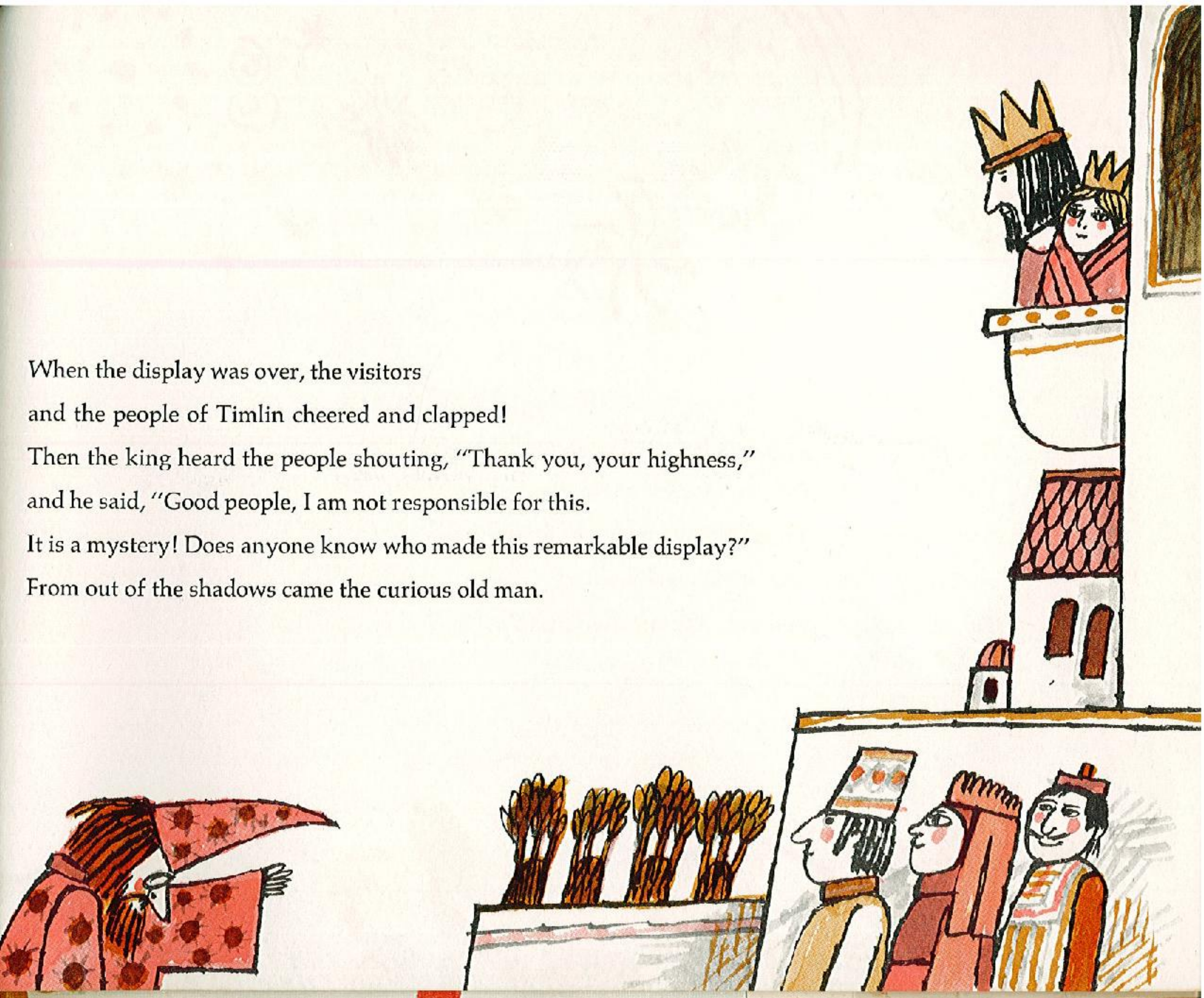
and the people of Timlin cheered and clapped!

Then the king heard the people shouting, "Thank you, your highness,"

and he said, "Good people, I am not responsible for this.

It is a mystery! Does anyone know who made this remarkable display?"

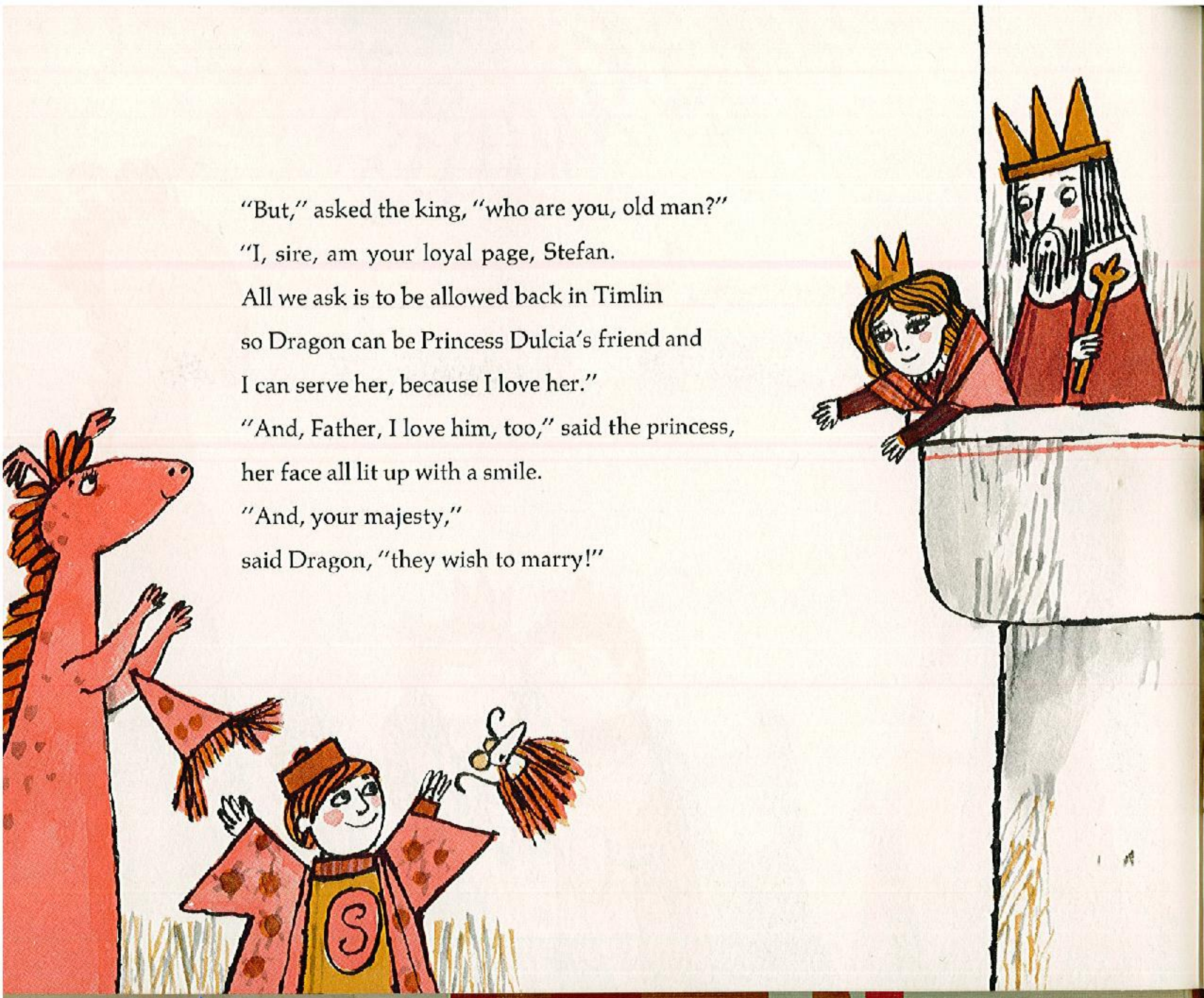
From out of the shadows came the curious old man.



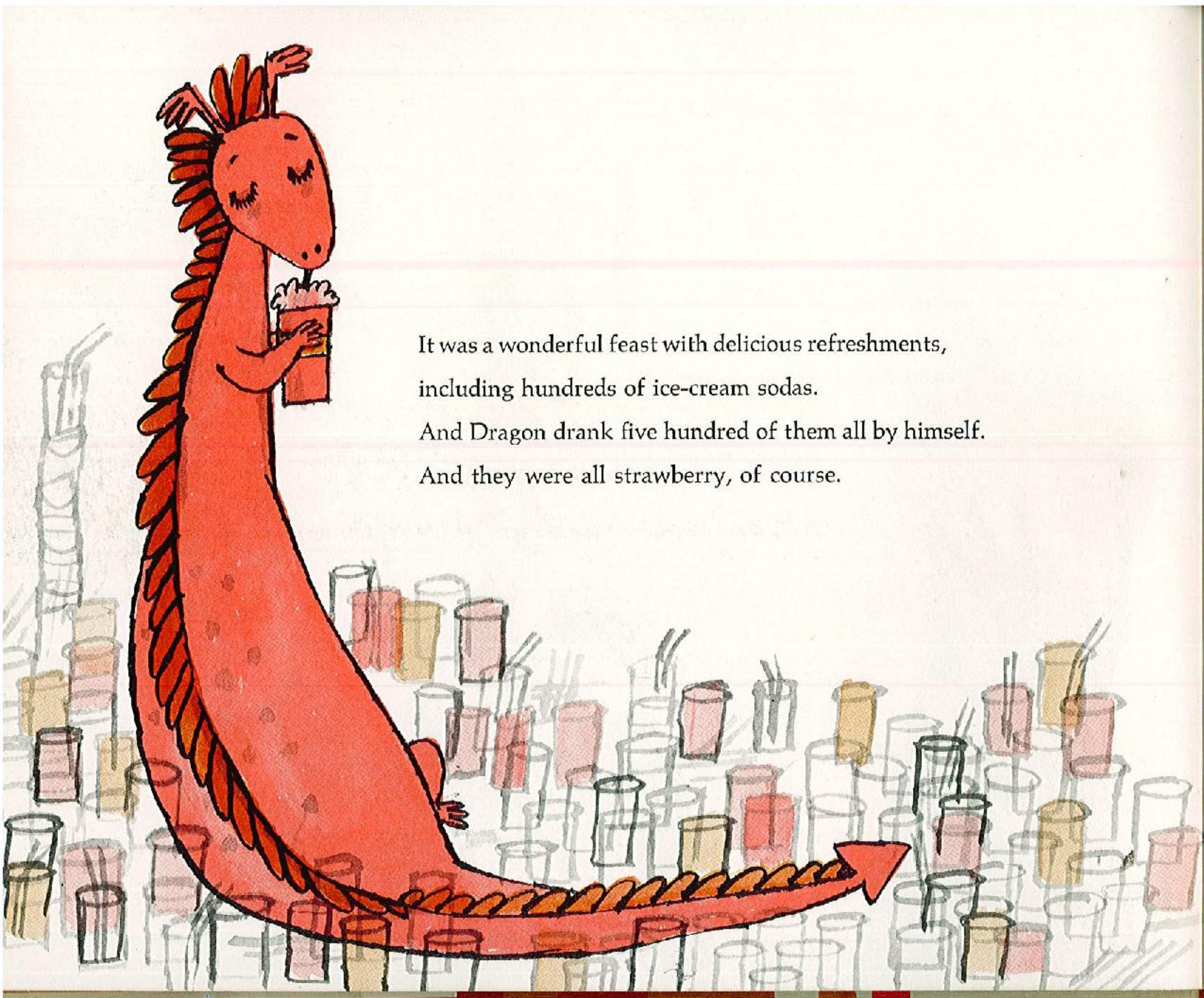
"Your majesty, good people, I can reveal the mystery.
But I will do so only if you will listen quietly and patiently.
These magnificent fireworks were made by a remarkable and gentle beast."
And very timidly Dragon appeared.
"For the first time in his life," the old man said,
"Dragon has used his power to breathe fire and smoke.
He only wants to make people happy.
Please have no fear of him. And now, Dragon—"
Dragon closed his eyes as if to concentrate,
and out of his mouth a small ball of fire flew into the sky
and burst into the most beautiful firework of all.

The crowds cheered and shouted, "Long live the wonderful dragon."

"But," asked the king, "who are you, old man?"
"I, sire, am your loyal page, Stefan.
All we ask is to be allowed back in Timlin
so Dragon can be Princess Dulcia's friend and
I can serve her, because I love her."
"And, Father, I love him, too," said the princess,
her face all lit up with a smile.
"And, your majesty,"
said Dragon, "they wish to marry!"



"Hmmm," said King Alex. "Because you have made
my daughter happy again, I hereby proclaim you Prince Hero.
And now to celebrate the marriage of Princess Dulcia
and Prince Hero, everyone is invited to a party."



It was a wonderful feast with delicious refreshments,
including hundreds of ice-cream sodas.
And Dragon drank five hundred of them all by himself.
And they were all strawberry, of course.

TOMIE DE PAOLA

Tomie de Paola grew up in Connecticut and was graduated from Pratt Institute. Now he lives in New York and commutes to Boston, where he teaches art at the Newton College of the Sacred Heart. He has illustrated three picture books, SOUND, WHEELS, and THE TIGER AND THE RABBIT.

Besides painting and writing, Tomie de Paola loves Vermont, snow, dragons —and strawberry ice-cream sodas.

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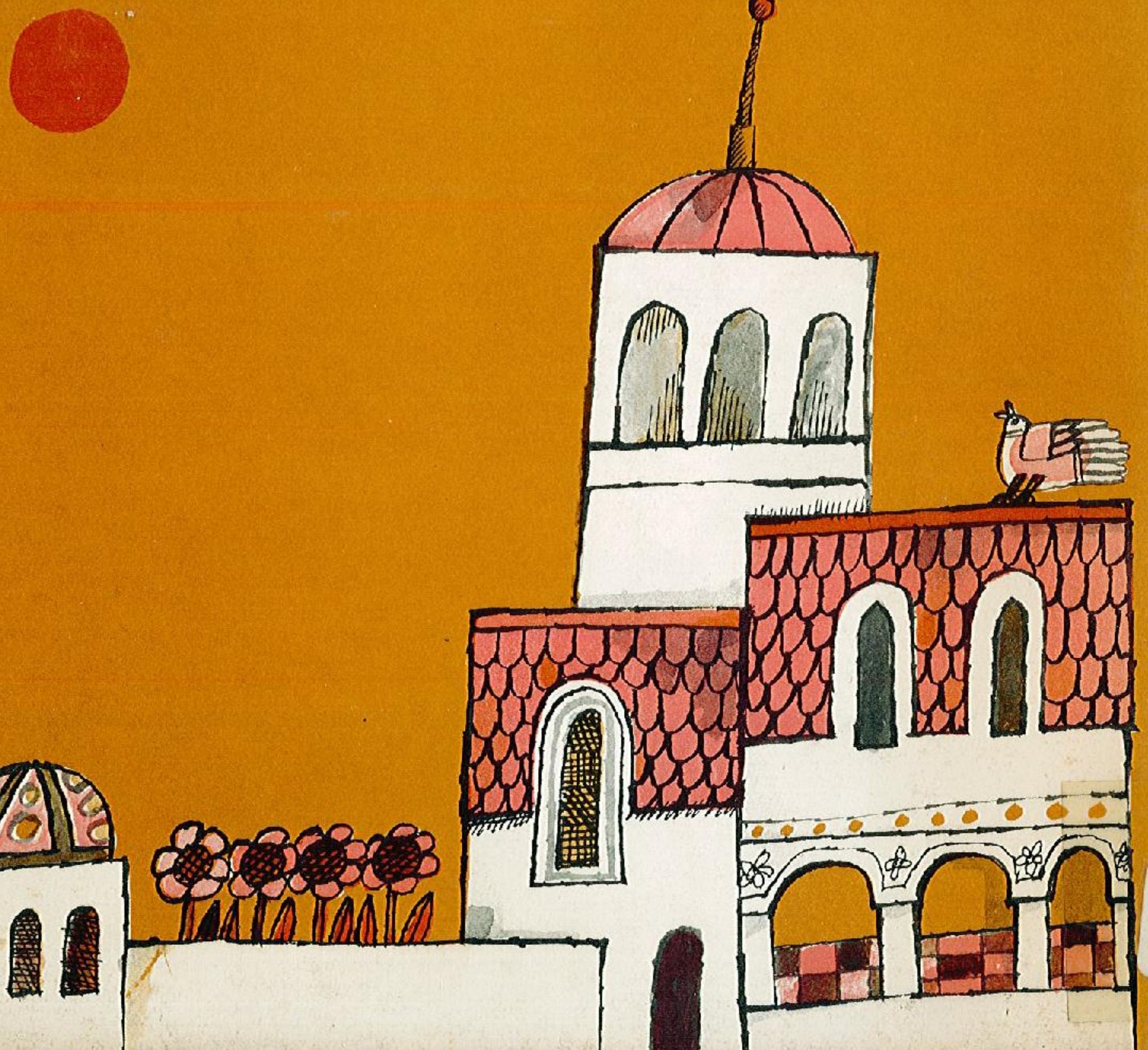

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